

# **FRESH ENCOUNTER**



A 28-DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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LifeWay Press®

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. The 2000 statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* is our doctrinal guideline.

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# LET'S SEEK THE LORD TOGETHER

*Those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name (Mal. 3:16).*

Today we're facing a period of moral and spiritual decline that is perhaps more rapid and widespread than ever in our history. Almost everywhere we go, we hear churches and people cry out for revival. They are saying that what they are experiencing is so bad, so dry, and so empty that they want a fresh touch from God. They want to experience God in the ways God's people experienced His mighty power and presence in the Scriptures and in history. Some are experiencing a fresh breeze of God's Spirit. Small mercy drops are falling in some localities. But many are saying, "We don't know what to do." Their heart cry is: "Is there a word from the Lord? What does God say we need to do?"

God's Word has an answer for us. God has revealed Himself and His ways as He has worked with His people down through the ages. He has spoken clearly about His expectations and standards. He has revealed principles and described examples. He stands ready to pour out times of refreshing on the dry and thirsty ground of our lives. But He's waiting on a people who are willing to pay the price of surrender and obedience to His will and His ways. He's waiting on a people who will return with their whole heart to a love relationship with their Creator and Savior. Will you be such a person? Will you join with others who are willing to be such persons?

In Malachi 3:16 we read that "those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard." We've prepared this devotional guide to facilitate that kind of conversation and prayer. We want God's people to study His Word about revival and spiritual awakening. We want to help you talk about His will and His ways. We want to assist you in seeing His standards and choosing to return to Him. We want to encourage you to pray together with others to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Heb. 10:24).

## Using This Devotional Guide

Spend time daily with the Lord. Each day use one devotional message to examine God's Word, understand God's pattern, and be encouraged by God's activity in the past. Take time to pray as you seek the kind of relationship with God through which He can revive you and use you for revival and awakening. Once each week, join others in "Seeking God Together for Revival in the Land." Days 7, 14, 21, and 28 will guide your time of talking and praying together.



This devotional guide has been designed to make your job as a leader as simple as possible. Invite group members to participate by taking a book and beginning to read the daily messages. Days 7, 14, 21, and 28 are set aside for your small-group session. Notice on pages 18-19 (for example) that instructions are given to guide the small-group session. You may choose to follow those instructions exclusively or supplement them with your own questions and prayer suggestions. Below are some additional suggestions that may be helpful.

**Introductory Session.** On page 64 you will find a list of additional resources. The Leader Kit has an introductory videotape with Henry Blackaby over viewing God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening. You can use that message as an introductory session and then distribute this book to members who will then begin the devotional study.

**Churchwide Emphasis.** Pastors may choose to introduce this message to their entire church. Preach messages on biblical revivals, God's mission of world redemption and our part in it, how to know when you've departed from God, the nature and necessity of repentance for revival, and so forth. The *Fresh Encounter* paperback book (0-8054-6368-2) has an extensive section to guide spiritual leaders in preparing a church for revival and guiding them to return to the Lord. It would provide additional content and illustration to supplement what members will be reading in this devotional. This book provides valuable insights on guiding a group in returning to the Lord that would be beneficial to you as you lead your group.

**Follow-up Options.** Churches or groups wishing to continue this pursuit of God for revival may want to consider one or more of the following:

1. Fresh Encounter Weekend. Contact [www.blackaby.org](http://www.blackaby.org) for information or assistance in conducting a church renewal weekend.
2. Study of Member Books 1 and 2 will take members further in understanding the message and responding to God's plumb line in Scripture. The six video plumb line messages from Henry Blackaby may be especially helpful in guiding people to return to the Lord.

**Multiplication of the Message.** Revival in our land will require many people and churches returning to a right relationship with God. Each session invite members to practice drawing the diagram from the inside back cover of the book from memory. Divide the group into pairs and ask one or both members to explain the pattern as far as they have studied it (Session 1: overview it all; Session 2: Phases 1-2; Session 3: Phases 1-4; Session 4: Phases 1-7). Encourage members to watch for opportunities to share God's pattern with others and encourage them to seek the Lord together for revival. Watch for opportunities for your members to share testimonies with other groups or churches and invite them to start praying for revival and spiritual awakening.

## OTHER *FRESH ENCOUNTER* RESOURCES

### ***Member Book 1: God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening***

This six-week study examines God's pattern for revival and spiritual awakening from a biblical and historical perspective. Each week individuals study five daily assignments. Groups meet once each week to discuss what members have learned and what members sense God wants them to do in response. Christians develop a renewed sense of identity with the people of God and prepare themselves to respond corporately to God's invitation to revival. (0-8054-9920-2)

### ***Member Book 2: A Plumb Line for God's People***

This book serves as a listening guide for the six video messages by Henry Blackaby. Plumb Line messages include: "God's Standards for the Family," "Religion vs. Reality," "Substitutes for God," "World's Ways vs. Kingdom Ways," "Unholy Living vs. Holy Living," and "Broken Relationships vs. Unity in the Body." The book provides summary statements from each of the messages, Scripture texts for each theme, and questions to help individuals and churches examine how they measure up against God's plumb line. (0-8054-9919-9)

### ***Fresh Encounter Leader Manual***

This manual provides administrative suggestions for use of all the series resources. It includes the small-group learning activities Member Book 1. Training and guidelines are given to help spiritual leaders use *A Plumb Line for God's People* (book and video) in a large-group setting to guide God's people to return to Him in repentance and experience genuine revival. (0-8054-9921-0)

### ***Fresh Encounter Leader Kit***

Includes one copy each of both Member Books; the Leader Manual, an introductory video in which Henry Blackaby provides the scriptural background and overview of the seven phases in God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening; six 30-minute video messages by Henry Blackaby to be used with *Member Book 2: A Plumb Line for God's People*; and 12 audio messages by Henry Blackaby and Avery Willis. (0-8054-9898-2)

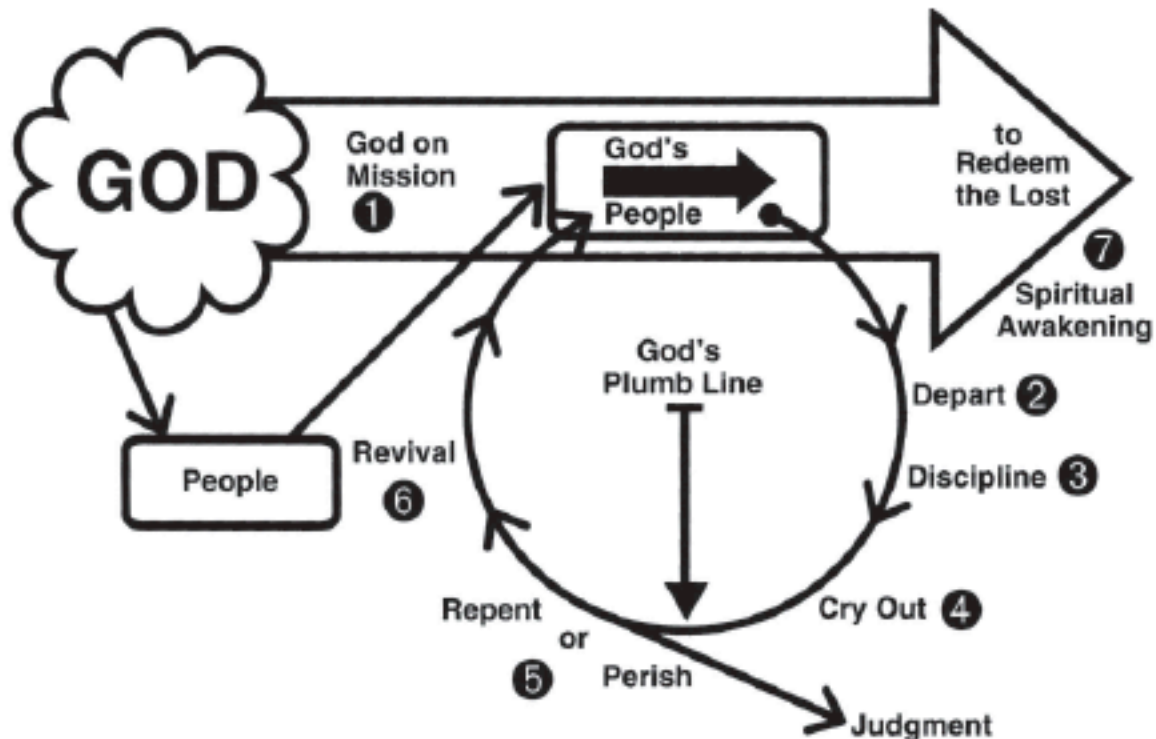
### ***Fresh Encounter Paperback Book***

This compilation of the messages in the two member books and the Leader Manual together with additional illustrations and counsel serves as a comprehensive and encouraging study of biblical and historical patterns for revival. Spiritual leaders will find it particularly practical in leading God's people to return to Him. (0-8054-6368-2)



**To order any of the *Fresh Encounter* resources call 1-800-458-2772, order online at [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com), or visit a LifeWay Christian Store.**

# GOD'S PATTERN FOR REVIVAL AND SPIRITUAL AWAKENING



**PHASE 1** God is on mission to redeem a lost world. God calls His people into a relationship with Himself, and He accomplishes His work through them.

**PHASE 2** God's people tend to depart from Him, turning to substitutes for His presence, purposes, and ways.

**PHASE 3** God disciplines His people out of His love for them.

**PHASE 4** God's people cry out to Him for help.

**PHASE 5** God calls His people to repent and return to Him or perish.

**PHASE 6** God revives His repentant people by restoring them to a right relationship with Himself.

**PHASE 7** God exalts His Son Jesus in His people and draws the lost to saving faith in Him.

